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**Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors**  
77 South High Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108  
www.funeral.ohio.gov

Governor  
*John Kasich*  
Executive Director  
*Vanessa Niekamp*

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE OHIO SENATE  
FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE  
STATE FISCAL YEARS 2016 AND 2017 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Vanessa Niekamp, Executive Director  
Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors  
May 12, 2015

**Introduction:**

Chairman Beagle, Vice Chair Williams, and respected members of the Senate Finance and Appropriation Subcommittee on Workforce. My name is Vanessa Niekamp and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. I am pleased to appear before you today to testify in support of the board's operating budget for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

**Background:**

The Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors was created by the Ohio Legislature in 1902. The Board is established under Chapter 4717 of the Ohio Revised Code, with a mandate to license and regulate an industry that eventually is going to confront us all.

Every year in Ohio, a little over 110,000 of our residence pass away leaving loved ones to interact with the Funeral Industry. On the average, most consumers will not have direct business contact with the Funeral Industry until the age of 50. With an average funeral cost of \$8,000 to \$10,000; Americans spend over \$17 billion dollars each year on the rituals and customs surrounding death. Deaths are expected to rise in the United States by over 30%, by the year 2030 when the first of the baby-boomers turn 85.

The mission of the Board is to protect those consumers and regulate the funeral service profession by establishing a standard of competency through the licensure of embalmers, funeral directors, crematory facilities, embalming facilities, and funeral homes. The quality of service provided by the Board ensures public health, establishes fair business practices and protects a vulnerable clientele.



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## Board and Staff:

The seven-member Board is comprised of five members licensed as embalmers and funeral directors, one knowledgeable in the area of cremation. Two Board members represent the public, one must be sixty years of age or older. The Governor appoints the Board Members who are confirmed by the Ohio Senate to serve five-year terms.

The Board employs six individuals: an executive director, two inspectors, two administrative assistants, and one license examiner.

The Board and its Staff conduct monthly meetings to review applications, monitor apprentices, issue licenses, approve continuing education programs, discuss compliance issues, determine discipline, and discuss issues involving funeral service.

## Revenue Generating Functions:

The Board oversees nine license types. The vast majority of licensure is for just three license types: Embalmers, Funeral Directors, and Funeral Homes. Together in SFY2015, these three license types accounted for 95% of the active licenses.

The Board is entirely supported by license fees and other receipts that are deposited into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90).

In addition to licensing, the Board carries out inspections of funeral homes, crematories, embalming facilities, and investigates consumer complaints related to the funeral profession. In SFY2014 the Board's two inspectors visited 933 facilities, with 38 follow-up inspections to re-inspect facilities where violations were found. There are approximately 1,300 licensed facilities statewide.

In SFY2014, the Board investigated 385 complaints against 106 facilities statewide. Of these, about one-third involved three types of complaints. Unprofessional conduct accounted for 77 complaints involving 52 facilities, pre-need funeral contracts accounted for 42 cases associated with 10 facilities, and funeral bill disputes accounted for 19 cases at 8 facilities. Overall, fines and recoveries as a result of investigations and inspections totaled approximately \$128,000 in FY 2014.

| Biannual License Fees         |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Crematory                     | \$350.00 |
| Embalmer Apprentice           | \$ 10.00 |
| Embalmer Registration         | \$ 25.00 |
| Embalmer                      | \$150.00 |
| Embalming Facility            | \$350.00 |
| Funeral Director Apprentice   | \$ 10.00 |
| Funeral Director Registration | \$ 25.00 |
| Funeral Director              | \$150.00 |
| Funeral Home                  | \$350.00 |
| Courtesy Card Permit          | \$150.00 |



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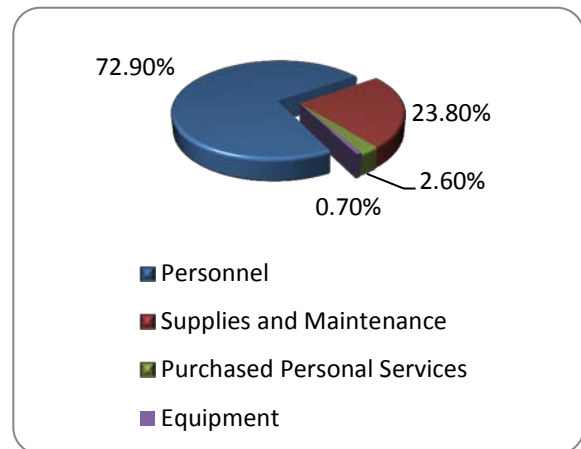
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### **Priorities:**

The Board's priorities include: regular inspection of funeral facilities, and provide monitoring and oversight of the increased number of pre-need funeral plans sold each year.

### **Executive Budget Recommendation:**

The Executive Budget Recommendations include funding of \$741,000 in SFY2016, or a 0% increase when compared with SFY2015. For SFY2017, the recommendation includes a 4% increase in funding to \$771,000. Personnel costs are the Board's biggest expense, accounting for 72.9% of the Executive Budget Recommendations for the biennium. A further 23.8% is slated for supplies and maintenance, 2.6% is for purchased personal services, equipment, and other expenses, and the remaining 0.7% is for equipment.



### **Conclusion:**

With your support, the Executive Budget Recommendations will fund our current payroll, operating and maintenance costs over the 2016/2017 Biennium.

I appreciate your consideration and am available for any questions you may have regarding the Board's budget request, or regulation of the death care industry.